



Heinz's Story, Chapter 4

It had become very urgent to escape so my brother Frank here in Leeds tried whatever he could and eventually succeeded in finding me what was called a trainee post in a clothing factory, I mean Leeds was full of clothing factories. The trainee scheme was one of only 3 ways people were admitted to this country apart from the very rich. One was the trainee scheme which meant young men – it was all men, no women - between 16 and 35 I think who were taken on by industry in order to learn a new trade. And this was the clothing industry, I became a trainee presser. The other scheme was for women and girls in domestic service and the third was for children under 16 who came by Kindertransport. And there were no other ways you could get into this country. So that's how I came to Leeds.

My brother had to leave in 1935. Do you want the story of that? He had gone into the family business when he was about 19 or thereabouts. He also left school, did an apprenticeship in a bank, and then in a department store in Cologne for a year or two but then he entered the family business. He became friendly with one of the staff, a non-Jewish girl, which at that time was not yet illegal but certainly hardly tolerated and the Nazi shop staff rep was overheard by the switchboard girl speaking to the Gestapo, the local Gestapo, telling them that Frank had this girlfriend. And the switchboard girl told my father what she had overheard so we had a quick family meeting and it was decided that he should disappear. And he packed his bag and went overnight to Switzerland, ostensibly for health reasons. And he managed to get out. So he spent there in Switzerland about 6 months I think, when he managed to get a permit to come to England. Manchester at first, worked there in the tailoring, clothing industry and then his firm transferred him to Leeds, to their Leeds branch about 1937 or so. And he was in Leeds, and that's why I've come to Leeds.

Could you have applied for other countries?

I applied everywhere. It was a time when you sent out dozens of letters, you dug out relatives you'd forgotten you had in other countries, you dug out friends of people who, friends of friends, and asked them could they help you get to America, to South America, anywhere, wherever, whoever would accept us. France, Spain – well Spain was already a Fascist country – so it was a very difficult time.